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RE-EVALUATION AND REVISION OF OPC PLANS
RELATING TO ALBANIA

General Discussion

1. Changes in the international situation since the formulation of the present OPC plan relating to Albania justify a critical re-examination of the factors determining the policy towards that country and a re-evaluation and revision of the objectives and character of OPC action.

2. The original OPC project against Albania was approved on 22 June 1949, at a time when Yugoslavia's position with respect to the Soviet Union and the Cominform Bloc was not clear, and when Albania was a major factor in the support of Communist guerrillas in Greece. The main objective of the project at that time was the overthrow of the Hoxha regime through the use of a shock force consisting of Albanians recruited from among the refugees and exiles located in several Mediterranean countries. In December 1949, as a result of new developments, including a new attitude toward Tito on the part of the U.S. and U.K., and the cessation of Communist guerrilla operations in Greece, the Albanian project was revised and more modest objectives were established, overthrow of the Hoxha regime having been abandoned for the time being.

3. The main reasons leading to the revision of the original project and the abandonment of the large-scale rebellion to be brought about through the introduction of the U. S. and British-sponsored shock force were the following:

a. An attempt to overthrow the regime might induce Soviet action against Yugoslavia on the pretext of furnishing aid to Albania.

b. Large-scale disorders in Albania might lead to the introduction of Soviet tactical units and to greater Soviet military activity which would not only cause a collapse of the rebellion but would also materially strengthen the Soviet position in Albania and hence in the Mediterranean area.

4. As presently constituted, the Albanian project is intended to achieve the following ends:

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a. To reduce the value of Albania to the Soviet Union by persistently and continuously undermining Communist authority and by harassing the Hoxha regime with domestic difficulties. Such harassment restricts the usefulness of Albania in any scheme of aggression against either her neighbors or against the West.

b. To encourage and assist the Albanian people in their resistance to the Hoxha regime, to keep alive the hope of eventual liberation, and to prepare them psychologically for any eventual action to free the country from Communist tyranny.

c. To create, foster, and clandestinely support a skeleton resistance organization which could be utilized on short notice as the foundation for an effective liberation movement.

5. The machinery for the implementation of the OPC project against Albania has been set up and is functioning. Operations are actually under way, and have yielded tangible results in spite of the relatively limited activity which has already taken place. It remains to be determined whether in the light of new considerations it is desirable to increase the tempo of activity, decrease the tempo, or modify the character of the operations.

New Considerations

6. Among new or changed factors which should receive consideration are the following:

a. There are various indications that Yugoslavia may be attacked by the Cominform Bloc in the near future, either by the neighboring satellite states or with the active participation of the Soviet armed forces.

b. There has been an increase in Soviet military personnel in Albania indicative of an effort to bolster Albanian military strength.

c. Yugoslavia, which actually fears a Cominform attack, plans to occupy Albania without delay in the event of aggression, and considers it possible to do so within a period of some ten days.

d. Yugoslavia is engaging in a great deal of clandestine activity in Albania, and is reported to be recruiting a force among Albanians in Yugoslavia with a view to creating a shock force of the type envisioned in the original OPC project for initiating the rebellion for the overthrow of the Hoxha regime.

e. Tito is disturbed by the U. S. and British activities.

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in Albania, and has made it clear that he would feel easier if they were discontinued.

f. In addition to the Yugoslav activities, clandestine activities in Albania are being conducted by the Greeks, the Italians, and the British. The situation is further confused by the fact that these various countries are using rival political elements among the Albanians.

g. The Italians and the Greeks do not agree with U. S. policy toward Albania, and are basically hostile to U. S. objectives and to the Albanian political groups supported by the U. S.

h. Either as a result of considerations involving Tito or Italy, or both, the British Foreign Office would welcome the termination of OPC activities in Albania, although it is prepared to approve their continuation at the present level of activity for the next year.

7. Of these factors the most important ones for the purposes of this discussion are the ones bearing on relations with Yugoslavia and on possible armed activity by members of the Cominform Bloc against that country. Aggressive intentions against Yugoslavia are undoubtedly part of current Soviet imperialistic policy, but Albania can at this time become an element in the military picture only after Yugoslavia is attacked from some other side; Albania is too weak militarily to strike the first blow. On the other hand, the Soviet Union may use armed action by Yugoslavia (or any other power) against Albania as a pretext for military action against Yugoslavia on the grounds that the intervention is on behalf of a victim of aggression. There is thus a possibility that in a sense Albania could be used by the Cominform as an agent provocateur calculated to create a situation which would justify either Soviet occupation of Albania for "protection", or a Soviet attack against Yugoslavia.

8. In view of the serious consequences of a Yugoslav attack on Albania, it would appear probable that Tito would not take the initiative against Albania until he himself is attacked elsewhere. However, as soon as Yugoslavia does invade Albania, it can be safely assumed that the Greeks will immediately take action to occupy the Northern Epirus, taking full advantage of the opportunity to acquire the territory which they covet so intensely. The key to the whole question is the ability of the U. S. to maintain the initiative, moral leadership and the decisive role in any situation leading to a change of political balance in the Balkans. Unless the U. S. is in a position to exert some influence in this situation, the prospect of an independent Albania disappears immediately. Another possible

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and undesirable consequence of a Yugoslav invasion of Albania is the fact that such action could not only provide the Soviets with the needed justification for armed intervention (possibly with airborne troops), but could also weaken the moral grounds for U. S. and U. N. O. action in coming to the support of Tito.

9. It is emphasized that the partition of Albania is inevitable if no other force is present to counteract the efforts of the Yugoslavs and the Greeks in the event the former intervene in Albania. The consequences of such partition would be particularly unfortunate, not only because of the political problems it would pose but also because the event would provide grounds for charges that the U. S., idly standing by, had permitted a small country to be swallowed up by its imperialist neighbors. A most undesirable psychological reaction could be expected, both within as well as outside Albania, which would be damaging to the prestige and cause of the U. S.

10. The Albanian problem could be satisfactorily solved from the U. S. point of view if it were possible to effect an overthrow of the Hoxha regime prior to any Cominform attack on Yugoslavia, and to establish a democratic government there before Yugoslavia had the time and pretext to act. This is the original concept of the OPC Albanian project which was revised because of the dangers of Soviet-inspired action against Yugoslavia or a protective Soviet occupation of Albania.

11. If no effort is made to introduce a U. S.-sponsored force into Albania until after Cominform aggression against Yugoslavia has begun, there is serious danger of the rapid partition of Albania between Yugoslavia and Greece, with the result that the U.S. will be confronted with a fait accompli of a type contrary to U. S. policy, and one bringing about a situation which would be extremely difficult to correct.

12. Since a Yugoslav invasion of Albania would serve no useful purpose even in the event the former is attacked by the Cominform Bloc, and would only provide the Greeks with a pretext for intervention in the Northern Epirus, and since it is essential to introduce into Albania some armed element capable of overthrowing the present Communist government and representative of the democratic groups sponsored by the U. S., it is considered that Tito should be discouraged from any intervention in Albania under any circumstances, and that a shock force recruited by OPC under the auspices of the National Committee for Free Albania should be introduced into Albania to provide the backbone for a full-scale rebellion against Hoxha. If Tito cannot be reassured concerning the security of Albania, then at least the U. S. should insist on the participation of a U. S.-sponsored shock force in Albanian operations in order to provide some voice for the U. S.-supported political elements in the reconstituted Albanian government.

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13. In view of the real danger of aggression against Yugoslavia, it is essential for OPC to be ready to act in Albania as soon as possible. This action will be required regardless of the misgivings and present attitude of the Yugoslavs, Greeks, Italians, and British. It is therefore essential to prepare the ground through an intensification of the current activities in Albania, and through the creation and training of the shock force to be used when the time for large-scale operations against the Hoxha regime is ripe. The question of timing the shock force operation will determine the success or failure of U. S. action, and is one that can only be solved as the situation develops. The actual decision to use this shock force should be based on policy to be formulated at a later date, but the preparation of the force ~~must~~ ^{should} be undertaken immediately.

Recommendations

14. In order to accomplish the objectives indicated in the preceding paragraph it is recommended that the following action be taken:

a. That the tempo of OPC operations against Albania be increased to prepare the ground for eventual active intervention through the use of a large shock force to effect the following:

(1) Facilitate the support of Yugoslavia in the event she is attacked, through making Yugoslav intervention in Albania unnecessary because the U. S.-sponsored force will provide the necessary security by upsetting the Hoxha regime.

(2) Hamper Soviet activities directed against Yugoslavia or Greece through Albania.

(3) Activate a nationalist Albanian movement to assert Albania's claim to independence and a democratic form of government, and to counteract influences arising from Yugoslav and Greek interests in partitioning the country; to furnish political justification to the U. S. for supporting Albania's claim to independence; and possibly to furnish temporary support to Tito.

b. That An Albanian shock force be created and trained without delay, and kept in readiness for use as indicated above.

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